

because for all his beautiful quick-witted
dadaism, roger trusts in god, home,
country, apple-pie, and fatherhood.
of course he'll smoke a little dope,

but he will also sing the anthem loudly
at the lakers' games. i'm sure he'd go
to vietnam if he were asked, he might
even win a military victory.

and someday soon i'm sure he'll make
some nice young girl an ideal husband,
good provider, strong and silent, sexually-
knowledgeable, prudently unfaithful.

he will be generous to her, as he is always
generous to all of us: free pitchers,
quarters in the jukebox, takes the coin
slot from the table on slow afternoons.

he loans us money, doesn't hassle if a glass
or cue stick's broken, doesn't hassle
if you stay a little after hours or
get drunk and clear the place out with your singing.

still the bar makes money.
which is a credit to the clientele. which might
even make roger right, that americans aren't all
assholes, just folks. i'll drink to that.

scratch one

hungover, out of sorts, due for an
appointment with the income tax
consultant, i stopped by the office
to pick up the mail. it was

a bland day, no rejection slips, nothing
accepted, but someone had posted
a sign in the mailroom: funeral
services for weldon niva 1:00 o'clock

at sunnyside memorial chapel.
that's strange, i thought, to give
a funeral for weldon niva when
he isn't even dead yet. it seemed

in questionable taste to say the least.
granted, he was hardly the most
protean, galvanic, or mercurial
instructor in our midst, but certainly

the undergraduates do
carry their lampoons a bit too far,
especially around exam time, when their
self-made pressures tend to cook their geoses.

so i asked the long-haired dude
stuffing junk mail, and he said,
"yeah, slit his wrists and ankles;
didn't have the decency to shoot himself."

so then i asked the secretary, and she said,
"yes, he apparently was paranoid, he thought
someone was following him. wouldn't you think
his wife would have gotten him in to a doctor."

she also said, "it goes to show, it's always
the ones you least expect, the quiet ones."
well not always, but old weldon
was a quiet one alright, a woodrow

wilson sort, although i'd heard
that he displayed a dry britannic wit in class.
he was a thorough lecturer, replete with
the hugest briefcase in captivity.

he visited my class last fall
to advertise the honors program, and i
showed unusual (for me) restraint in not alluding
to that stuffed portfolio. now i'm glad.

i'm also glad he tripped out so in character,
his final grades signed, sealed, delivered,
the semester tied up neatly in an academic tassel.
we're rare birds, us eggheads.

poop

my daughter, blake, is in kindergarten. they are teaching
her to be a docile citizen and, incidentally, to read.
concurrently, like many of us, she has become a trifle
anal compulsive. complications ensue.

i ask her what she has learned today. she says, "i learned
the pledge of allegiance." "how does it go?" i ask.
"it goes," she says, "i poop allegiance to the poop of
the united poops of ameripoop."

"that's good," i say, "that's very good. what else?" "o
say can you poop, by the dawn's early poop, what so
proudly we pooped"

for christmas, she improvises, "away in a pooper, all cover-
ed with poop, the little lord poopus lay pooping his
poop."